

# 10 Shocking Truths About German Soldiers In The Great War - Unveiling Their Untold Stories

The Great War, also known as World War I, was a conflict that changed the course of history and left an indelible mark on nations involved. While much is said and known about the experiences of Allied soldiers, we seldom hear about the German soldiers who fought for the Central Powers. In this article, we delve deep into their lives on the battleground, uncovering shocking truths about their experiences during this turbulent period.

## 1. A Harsh Reality: Youthful Enlistment

Contrary to popular belief, the German army in the Great War consisted of young soldiers, most of whom were teenagers. Driven by nationalistic fervor, many German boys as young as 15 years old lied about their age to join the battle. Their idealism and longing for adventure propelled them into the forefront of the war, where they faced unthinkable horrors beyond their years.

## 2. Brutal Training Regimen: Turning Boys into Warriors

German soldiers underwent intense and unrelenting training that transformed them into formidable fighting machines. Their training included grueling physical exercises, weapons handling, and tactical warfare. The rigorous regimen aimed at instilling discipline, obedience, and loyalty, molding the young recruits into hardened soldiers and preparing them for the tumultuous battles ahead.

**German Soldiers in the Great War: Letters and Eyewitness Accounts** by Carol Riddell (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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### **3. Trench Warfare: Living a Nightmare**

Trench warfare is synonymous with the Great War, and German soldiers were no exception to its horrors. Spending weeks and even months in muddy and rat-infested trenches, they endured unimaginable hardships. Constant shelling, snipers, and deadly diseases plagued their everyday existence. Many soldiers suffered from "trench foot," an excruciating condition caused by standing in waterlogged trenches for extended periods.

### **4. Gas Attacks: The Chemical Menace**

The use of poison gas was a terrifying reality of the Great War. German soldiers were both the victims and perpetrators of these deadly attacks. Ingenious gas masks and primitive gas-proof trenches were hastily developed as countermeasures, but the psychological damage on soldiers, haunted by the omnipresent threat of suffocation or disfigurement, was immeasurable.

### **5. Camaraderie Amidst Chaos: Forgotten Bonds**

Despite the terrible circumstances, German soldiers developed deep bonds of camaraderie amongst themselves. Living side by side in close quarters, risking their lives together, and relying on each other for survival forged unbreakable

friendships. Letters sent from the front lines reveal the emotional attachment soldiers had to their comrades, as they clung to the support network that helped endure the brutality of war.

## **6. A World of Propaganda: Shaping National Sentiment**

The German war effort heavily relied on propaganda to control public opinion. The authorities portrayed their soldiers as heroic figures, defending their nation against foreign aggression. The German soldiers were idolized and often depicted as symbols of bravery and self-sacrifice. The curated image, designed to boost morale and maintain support, obscured the harsh realities faced by the soldiers on the front lines.

## **7. The Silent Victims: Psychological Trauma**

The Great War inflicted immense psychological trauma on German soldiers, but there was little understanding of the long-term effects. Shell shock, now known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), haunted many veterans, manifesting in flashbacks, nightmares, and anxiety. Lacking proper mental health support, these soldiers struggled to reintegrate into civilian life, carrying the hidden scars of battle for years to come.

## **8. The Forgotten Pillagers: German Atrocities**

While discussions about war crimes typically focus on the Allied forces, the German soldiers were not immune to committing atrocities. Reports indicate instances of pillaging, rape, and systematic destruction carried out by German troops. These actions, though not reflective of all soldiers, paint a darker picture of the German side and the ethical complexities faced by those on the front lines.

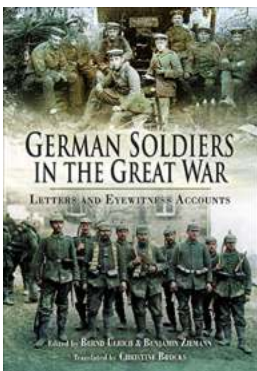
## **9. Women in the Shadows: Unsung Heroes**

While men dominated the war, German women played invaluable roles, both on the home front and closer to the battlefields. Often working as nurses, they tirelessly cared for the wounded soldiers, facing the grim reality of war. Their sacrifices and dedication provided a glimmer of humanity amid the chaos, yet their contributions remain largely underrated.

## 10. The Aftermath: Echoes of the Great War

The Great War brought irreversible changes to the world, and German soldiers bore witness to its aftermath. Stripped of their nationalistic zeal, many returned to a Germany plagued by economic, political, and social turmoil. The harsh Treaty of Versailles blamed Germany for the war, leading to resentment and sowing the seeds for future conflicts. The untold stories of German soldiers serve as a reminder of the human cost of war and the enduring legacies that shape our world today.

The stories of German soldiers in the Great War reveal a hidden side of history, shedding light on the experiences, struggles, and sacrifices they endured. From youthful enlistment to the psychological scars left behind, their untold narratives provide a deeper understanding of the horrors faced by all those involved. It is through honoring these stories that we can ensure the memory of those who fought, regardless of which side they were on, never fades away.



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The first English translation of writings that capture the lives and thoughts of German soldiers fighting in the trenches and on the battlefields of WWI.

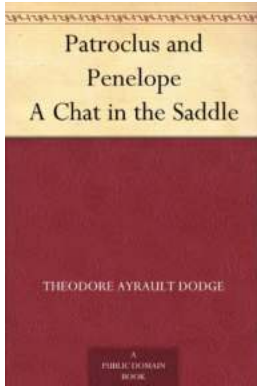
German Soldiers in the Great War is a vivid selection of firsthand accounts and other wartime documents that shed new light on the experiences of German frontline soldiers during the First World War. It reveals in authentic detail the perceptions and emotions of ordinary soldiers that have been covered up by the smokescreen of official military propaganda about “heroism” and “patriotic sacrifice.”

In this essential collection of wartime correspondence, editors Benjamin Ziemann and Bernd Ulrich have gathered more than two hundred mostly archival documents, including letters, military dispatches and orders, extracts from diaries, newspaper articles and booklets, medical reports and photographs. This fascinating primary source material provides the first comprehensive insight into the German frontline experiences of the Great War, available in English for the first time in a translation by Christine Brocks.



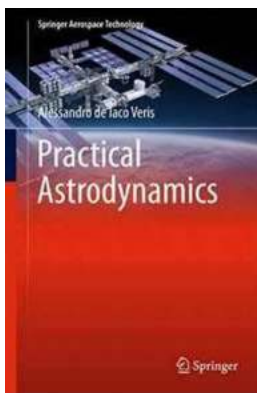
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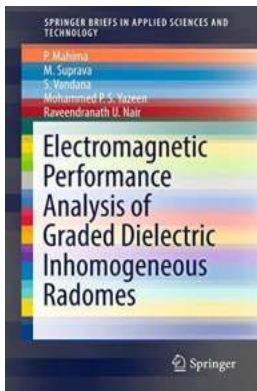
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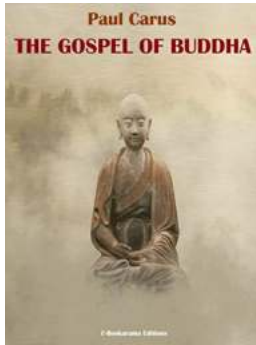
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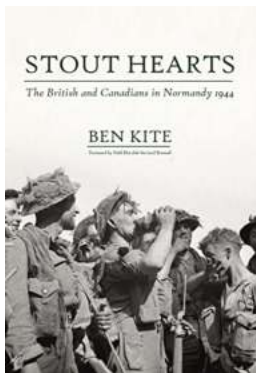
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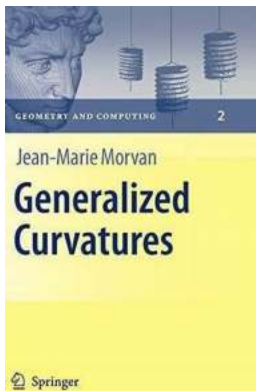
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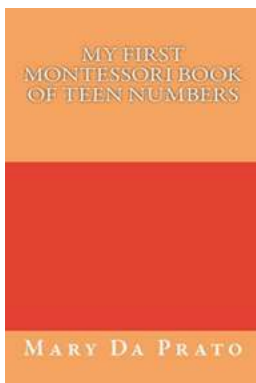
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